

## REMARKS

This is in response to the first Office Action of November 29, 2007. By this Amendment, claims 1-13 have been amended, claim 14 remains in its original form, and new claim 15 has been added. Thus, claims 1-15 are in the application for further examination.

In the Office Action, each of the claims were rejected as obvious over EP 0 194 634. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The disclosure of EP 0 194 634 is directed to a plasma spray gun nozzle which is coated by a layer made of an oxidation resistant and electrical conductive material. (See EP 0 194 634, column 2, lines 57-60.) Such a coating is only applied onto a surface area which is in contact with the plasma. Normally this is the inner wall of a bore. Such a coating or layer is formed only by the material in the form of crystallites and having an amorphous composition. The formed layer structure is not one containing microparticles.

A suitable process for depositing such a layer is a known vapor deposition in a vacuum chamber, like a physical vapor deposition process. The manufacturing is expensive in such a manner and it is difficult to form a layer inside a bore with small inner diameter. (See EP 0 194 634, column 4, lines 25-27.)

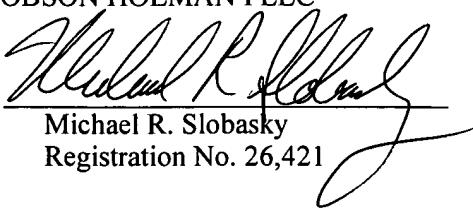
In contrast, the present invention concerns a nozzle for plasma torches formed of a metal or metal alloy with embedded microparticles of a hard material inside of the metal or metal alloy. The microparticles are arranged with distances to each other. The gaps between microparticles are filled by the metal or metal alloy. The structure of the inventive nozzle is clearly different from that of the prior art disclosed in EP 0 194 634.

In addition to the structural differences, the nozzle of the present invention is more easily manufactured and less expensive to manufacture than the nozzle of the prior art EP 0 194 634.

Thus, this application is now in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions after reviewing this Amendment, the Examiner is cordially invited to telephone the undersigned attorneys.

Respectfully submitted,

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